

Exercise

Why get fit?

Exercise is an important part of a lifetime of good health! There are many ways it can help you, both today and in the future.

Exercise can:

- Help lower your chances of getting certain diseases in the future, such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes
- Help you avoid obesity (Obesity puts you at risk of health problems today and in the future)
- Build muscles and make you stronger
- Boost your energy level and mood
- Make it easier to handle stress
- Help you to feel better about yourself
- Improve your flexibility so that you can move with ease
- Strengthen bones

Most people can benefit from exercise. In fact, making physical activity a regular part of your life early on is one of the most important things you can do to improve your health. If you have an injury or think there is a health reason why you may not be able to exercise safely, talk with your doctor before starting a new exercise program or sport.

You should also talk with a doctor first if you have:

- High blood pressure
- Heart trouble
- Dizzy spells
- Extreme breathlessness after physical activity
- Arthritis or bone problems
- Severe muscle, ligament or tendon problems
- Feel tired most of the time



Get Moving!

The more time you spend in front of the television or playing video games, the less time you have to be active. Leading a sedentary lifestyle can cause weight gain and even obesity (dangerously high weight), which can lead to type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol levels, and high blood pressure. These three health issues can hurt your heart and make it easier for you to get certain diseases. Make physical activity a regular part of your life. It can help you protect your health!

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Try out different activities.

Sick of jogging? Try rollerblading. Not interested in lifting weights? Try Pilates. Here's a list of fun activities:

Kickboxing	Kayaking
Snowboarding	SCUBA
Skateboarding	Pilates
Mountain biking	Yoga
Surfing	T'ai Chi
Sandboarding	Rock Climbing
Salsa dancing	Jump roping

Exercise and safety

When you exercise or play sports, it is important to use the right safety equipment.



Helmets are needed for sports such as baseball, softball, biking, snow skiing, snow boarding, and rollerblading. Make sure you wear the right helmet for the sport you are playing and that it is not too loose. Also make sure that the helmet you wear for biking has a sticker from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), which means that it is safe for this activity.

Mouth guards protect your mouth, teeth and tongue. You should wear a guard if there's a chance you could get hit in the head while taking part in activities such as volleyball, basketball, or martial arts. You can find mouth guards at sport stores or your dentist. It will also help keep your mouth safe to take out your retainer.

Special eye protection is needed for sports such as ice hockey, soccer, and basketball. Goggles and face masks should fit snugly and have cushion for a comfortable fit. If you wear glasses, you need to get fitted for guards that fit over your glasses.

It is important to wear the right footwear for your sport. Check with your coach or an athletic shoe salesperson about what shoes to wear.

Wrist, knee and elbow pads can help prevent broken bones when you are inline skating/rollerblading, skate or snow boarding, or playing sports such as hockey.



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Important safety tips:

- Don't exercise when it is really hot and humid out. You do not want your body to over-heat or get dehydrated. Also, if you live in an area with high air pollution, exercise early in the day or at night and avoid congested streets and rush hour traffic.
- Drink water before, during, and after exercise or sports competitions.
- Make sure you warm up and stretch your muscles for 5 minutes before and after workouts to make your muscles more flexible. It is easier to get hurt if your muscles are not stretched. It is also important to increase the intensity of your workout gradually. If you exercise intensely right away, you could risk getting hurt.
- See a doctor or let your parents/guardian know if: 1) You are in severe pain, 2) you see swelling around where you got hurt, or 3) The pain gets in the way of sleep and activities. Don't jump back to your regular exercise after getting hurt because you could get hurt again. Follow your doctor's orders for how to care for your injury and when you can be active again. This includes following instructions for use of pain medicine.
- Follow the rules of the game! The rules are there, in part, to keep you safe.



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